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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)
SUBJECT: IRANIAN MEDIA ATTACH ACCUSES KUWAITI COLUMNISTS
OF SPREADING LIES; JOURNALISTS' SYNDICATE CALLS FOR APOLOGY

REF: KUWAIT 4265

1. (SBU) During an October 28 interview with Al-Rai Al-Aam (local Arabic daily), Ridha Mustafaei, the Media Attach at the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait, sharply attacked some Kuwaiti columnists for writing articles critical of Iran, specifically Iran's nuclear program and its role in Iraq. "We have noticed recently that some of the writers in the Kuwaiti press are interested in publishing lies and gossip against the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian people to get a letter of thanks from foreign embassies," he said. Mustafaei claimed the columnists "repeat the words of the Israeli Prime Minister on Iran and justify the Zionist crimes against our fellow people in Qana," an apparent reference to the Israeli attack on Qana, Lebanon that resulted in tens of civilian deaths. He said Iran "realized that such irregular opinions do not represent the Kuwaiti people" and that "the wise Kuwaiti leadership does not accept such cheap pens." Mustafaei concluded by emphasizing that Iran-Kuwait relations were in their "golden era."

2. (SBU) The Kuwaiti Journalists Syndicate reacted strongly to Mustafaei's comments. In a statement issued October 29, the syndicate called on Mustafaei to apologize, saying he had violated "the boundaries of diplomatic and media etiquette" and noting that "freedom of expression is guaranteed by the Kuwaiti constitution." Several columnists also sharply criticized Mustafaei for his statements. Columnist Fuad Al-Hashim called on the Foreign Minister to declare Mustafaei persona non grata and sent back to "the oasis of democracy (sarcasm) in the Islamic Republic where half of the journalists are in prison and the other half are rubber stamps." Mustafaei later qualified his statements, saying he did not intend to insult all Kuwaiti press and was referring only to "one writer who declared that he had received a letter of thanks from the American administration for abusing Iran."

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